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FOR R, NEA, AND ECA/PE/C/CU

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SUBJECT: NEW ORLEANS ALL STARS BRASS BAND LIGHTS UP
EGYPT

REF: A) STATE 194800, B) STATE 194812, C) CAIRO 8192

1. SUMMARY: The New Orleans All Stars Brass Band played for about 900 people including senior representatives of the GOE, business leaders, military officers, and jazz fans in lively concerts in Alexandria on Nov. 18 and Cairo on Nov. 19. The concerts, held to thank the Egyptian government for its assistance to Hurricane Katrina victims, highlighted the value of the American-Egyptian partnership at a time of crisis. END SUMMARY

Press coverage

2. Al-Ahram and other Egyptian daily newspapers published favorable stories, including quotes from the Ambassador, following the concerts. In addition, Orbit satellite channel conducted interviews with the band and the Ambassador for a five-minute segment expected to air on the popular al-Qahira al-Yowm (Cairo Today) show seen by millions across the Arab world.

3. Press coverage even extended to the sports page. In al-Ahram's widely read Friday edition, the sports section ran a prominent photo of the Ambassador using the occasion of the concert to congratulate al-Ahly, a storied Cairo soccer club, for capturing the African Champions League crown.

4. Alexandria Channel 5 television broadcast an extended story on the Alexandria performance, focusing on attendance by senior military figures and the USG's message of thanks.

Cairo concert

5. While scheduling conflicts related to the parliamentary elections reduced attendance by invited VIPs in Cairo, post filled the gap with invitations to students and cultural contacts, who added a lively mix to the audience.

6. The audience responded with applause to the thanks offered by Ambassador Ricciardone and members of the band for Katrina assistance. (NOTE: Shortly after the hurricane, the Egyptian military dispatched two C-130 planes filled with relief supplies. END NOTE.) The Ambassador presented Egyptian Major General Mohamed Said El-Assar, Advisor to the Minister of Defense, a coffee-table book on New Orleans as a token of USG gratitude.

7. The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt sponsored a reception following the concert, providing an opportunity for the jazz musicians and Embassy officers to engage Egyptian guests, furthering the objective of strengthening cross-cultural, people-to-people engagement and exchanges. Among the guests were two New Orleans natives who had raised \$5,000 here for hurricane relief.

8. Photos of the concert and reception are on the Mission's website, cairo.usembassy.gov.

Alexandria

9. An audience of nearly 300 senior government, military, business and academic figures filled the Alexandria Creativity Center hall, clapping and rising to their feet to dance as the band played "Mardi Gras in Old New Orleans." American Presence Post Alexandria Principal Officer began the evening with remarks in Arabic, thanking the government and people of Egypt and in particular the Egyptian Armed forces, represented by a delegation of Egyptian Naval officers, for Egypt's assistance following Hurricane

Katrina.

110. Following the show, the band and audience members mingled in a reception and viewed an IIP paper show on Jazz and the city of New Orleans. Afterward, a smaller group of guests joined the band for dinner at a local restaurant.

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